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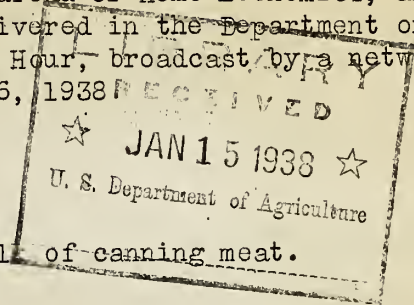
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HOUSEHOLD CALENDAR

Midwinter Canning

A dialogue between Miss Ruth Van Deman, Bureau of Home Economics, and Mr. Wallace Kadderly, Office of Information, delivered in the Department of Agriculture period of the National Farm and Home Hour, broadcast by a network of 48 associate NBC stations, Thursday, January 6, 1938



MISS VAN DEMAN:

The time has come, the Walrus said, to talk of canning meat.

MR. KADDERLY:

Not going to can the Walrus, are you Ruth?

MISS VAN DEMAN:

Not today, but you never can tell - - - if I should find myself up around the North Pole and had a walrus handy and a steam pressure canner - - -

MR. KADDERLY:

A steam pressure canner. I remember. The Bureau of Home Economics considers the steam pressure outfit something you can't be without - - -

MISS VAN DEMAN:

Yes, sir. If you're going to can meats and vegetables. We believe that when you have fresh wholesome meat produced on the farm, and go to all the work and bother of canning it, then it seems to us only good sense to use good science, and process it so it will stay wholesome.

MR. KADDERLY:

Very sound reasoning, Ruth, but - - -

MISS VAN DEMAN:

We have lots of records to back it up.

MR. KADDERLY:

I don't doubt that. And I don't wish to seem to be taking issue with the records. But what about these wonderful stories I hear of people rigging up a water-bath canner from the wash boiler and canning up a whole beef, or a lamb or two, or a lot of chicken.

MISS VAN DEMAN:

Maybe you don't hear the final chapter of those stories.

MR. KADDERLY:

Probably not always. But some folks say that they have pretty good luck.

MISS VAN DEMAN:

Luck is the right word. Did they say where they stored their canned meat?

(over)

MR. KADDERLY:

No, I don't think they did.

MISS VAN DEMAN:

I suspect they had a good cold cellar to keep it in.

MR. KADDERLY:

Might be.

MISS VAN DEMAN:

That sometimes explains the luck. If you store canned food in a very cold place, that may keep the bacteria from developing.

MR. KADDERLY:

Below incubation temperature in other words.

MISS VAN DEMAN:

Bacteriologically correct. But there's nothing to prevent them waking up and living later when conditions are more favorable. Ten chances to one they weren't really killed in the boiling-water bath.

MR. KADDERLY:

True enough.

MISS VAN DEMAN:

They may just have been changed into a more heat-resistant form.

MR. KADDERLY:

Yes, I know some bacteria can change from a vegetative to a spore form.

MISS VAN DEMAN:

And then it takes a powerful lot of heat to kill them. Especially in a dense protein food like meat. When you pack it into jars, you not only need a temperature hotter than boiling water. But you also have to hold that temperature long enough for it to penetrate to the center of the jars and kill the die-hard members of the bacteria tribe. That's why we recommend the steam pressure canner.

MR. KADDERLY:

Thank you, Ruth, for clearing up that point. I didn't mean to switch you off your own story.

MISS VAN DEMAN:

Not at all. You've helped me dispose of the villain right at the start. Now I'll just streamline the rest of it, if you don't mind.

MR. KADDERLY:

That will be perfectly all right. Go ahead.

MISS VAN DEMAN:

About the meat itself. Meat for canning needs to be in prime condition. That is slaughtered and handled in a strictly sanitary way. If it can be thoroughly chilled, so much the better. It's easier to cut up if it's cold.

But keep it from freezing if possible. Frozen meat doesn't make a high quality canned product. Sometimes of course meat's bound to freeze when the temperature goes down to zero and below.

When that happens, don't try to thaw it out before canning. Just cut it up, or saw it up if it's easier, into strips an inch or two thick. Plunge the frozen meat right into boiling water. And let it simmer until it's the color of cooked meat all through. Then pack it hot into the jars or tin cans, and process in the steam pressure canner.

Now just a word of caution about the pots and pans and table tops. They need to be well scrubbed and very clean, when you're handling meat. And don't put meat for canning in copper, iron, or galvanized iron utensils. They're likely to discolor the meat. Or if it should stand in galvanized iron, it might take up enough zinc to be harmful. It's better to use pans and kettles of enamelware, or aluminum, or tin - something that won't discolor the meat.

For the containers, either tin cans or glass jars are all right, provided you can seal them airtight.

It's a good idea to check up on the jar tops and rubber rings and be sure they'll make a perfect seal.

Or if you're using tin cans, keep a close watch on the sealing machine. See that it's rolling tin and gasket into a watertight, airtight seam.

Watch out for head space when you pack the meat into the containers. Leave about half an inch of free space at the top of glass jars. Tin cans don't need quite so much.

But be sure there's enough liquid to cover the meat. If the meat sticks up above the juice, it loses flavor and turns dark.

Yesterday afternoon I went down to our canning laboratory and had a talk with Mabel Stienbarger. I wanted to bring you any new wrinkles she may have found out about meat canning.

I asked her especially about packing the meat into the cans. She says it depends on how much meat you have. If you're handling a lot at a time - something like a whole beef - the quickest way is to cut it up into pound-size pieces and parboil them for 15 to 20 minutes. But don't try to pack these pound-size pieces into the cans. It's better to cut them up so you can have two or three smaller size pieces in each container. They process better that way.

Miss Stienbarger warns definitely against frying meat or browning it in fat before canning. Some way that appetizing "brown" flavor that's so good when you cook meat to serve fresh, doesn't carry over into the canned product. Instead canned meat that's been browned first is inclined to be dry and the flavor isn't so good.

I'm not going to try to give times and temperatures for processing now. They're about the most important thing of all in canning. But figures like that are too hard to keep straight over the airways. It's better to have them in a printed timetable so there's no chance of misunderstanding.

MR. KADDERLY:

Something like your canning bulletin?

MISS VAN DEMAN:

Yes, one woman tells us that's her canning bible.

MR. KADDERLY:

I can understand that. Because that bulletin carries not only timetables, but tells how to manage the steam pressure canner- - - in short, it's a last word in directions for canning.

MISS VAN DEMAN:

That's what we've tried to make it.

MR. KADDERLY:

Well, Ruth, thank you for all this good sense and sound science about canning meat. We'll be expecting you back with another home economics report next Thursday at this time. And for the benefit of anyone who hasn't a copy of the canning bulletin and would like one to use now or later in the spring, the full title is: "Home canning of fruits, vegetables, and meats". Just send a card to the Bureau of Home Economics, U. S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C., and ask for the bulletin - "Home canning of fruits, vegetables, and meats." There is no charge for it.